

Message Text

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PASS TO MARY VANCE TRENT, STATUS LNO.

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF AMBASSADOR HAYDN WILLIAMS' OPENING STATEMENT
AT SEVENTH ROUND OF STATUS NEGOTIATIONS WHICH BEGAN 14 NOVEMBER
1973 AT U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR. YOU MAY RELEASE TO MNS AND
OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES UPON RECEIPT.

"AMBASSADOR WILLIAMS' STATEMENT AT THE
OPENING PLENARY SESSION NOVEMBER 14, 1973

AS WE OPEN THIS SEVENTH ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS ON MICRONESIA'S
FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS, THE U.S. DELEGATION RENEWS ITS COMMITMENT
TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH YOU FAITHFULLY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY TO DE-
VELOP A STATUS AGREEMENT WHICH WILL BE IN THE MUTUAL INTEREST OF
MICRONESIA AND THE UNITED STATES. OUR TWO DELEGATIONS HAVE ALREADY
TRAVELLED A LONG ROAD TOWARD A SATISFACTORY FINAL AGREEMENT. I
HAVE NO DOUBT THAT AS WE LABOR TOGETHER PURPOSEFULLY IN THE DAYS
AHEAD WE WILL MAKE FURTHER SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS TOWARD THIS
COMMON OBJECTIVE.

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AT BARBER'S POINT A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AGO WE JOINTLY DECIDED

THAT A PAUSE IN THE TALKS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. IT WAS FELT THAT TIME WAS NEEDED TO ENABLE EACH DELEGATION TO REEXAMINE ITS POSITION IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE PREMISES WHICH HAD INITIALLY PROMPTED IT TO EMBARK ON A JOINT EFFORT TO CONSTRUCT A COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION REMAINED VALID, AND ASSUMING THAT THE ANSWER WAS AFFIRMATIVE, TO PREPARE ADEQUATELY FOR THE FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS REQUIRED TO BRING THESE TALKS TO FRUTION.

THIS PAUSE HAS BEEN LONGER THAN PERHAPS EITHER SIDE HAD ORIGINALLY ANTICIPATED. ITS LENGTH WAS OCCASIONED BY CIRCUMSTANCES UNFORESEEN AT BARBER'S POINT, RELATING INITIALLY TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE'S UNDERSTANDABLE NEED FOR TIME TO RECONSTITUTE ITS MEMBERSHIP FOLLOWING THE NOVEMBER, 1972, ELECTIONS TO THE CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA AND THEN SUBSEQUENTLY, TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE'S DESIRE TO HAVE THE U.S. CONSIDER, PRIOR TO THE RESUMPTION OF THESE NEGOTIATION, A COMPLICATED ISSUE NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO FUTURE STATUS YET OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO EVERY MICRONESIAN -- THAT IS, LAND, AND THE EARLY TRANSFER OR RETURN OF TITLE TO LOCAL MICRONESIAN ENTITIES.

THE PAST YEAR HAS NOT BEEN WASTED. IT HAS IN FACT PRODUCED SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN MOVING THE MICRONESIAN PEOPLE SEVERAL STEPS CLOSER TO SELF-GOVERNMENT -- AND THAT, OF COURSE IS, IN A FUNDAMENTAL SENSE, WHAT THESE NEGOTIATIONS ARE ALL ABOUT. DURING THE PAST YEAR MEMBERS OF THE TWO DELEGATIONS HAVE DISCUSSED INFORMALLY WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH THE TT ADMINISTRATION AND ELEMENTS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, ISSUES GERMANE TO MICRONESIA'S TRANSITION TO SELF-GOVERNMENT. THESE DISCUSSIONS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO CRITICAL DECISIONS BEARING DIRECTLY ON MICRONESIA'S MOVE TOWARD SELF-DETERMINATION AND SELF-GOVERNMENT. IN THIS REGARD I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT BRIEFLY ON THREE IMPORTANT RECENT ACTIONS.

FIRST, POLITICAL EDUCATION. IT IS APPARENT THAT AN EXPANDED, OBJECTIVE INFORMATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IS ESSENTIAL TO PREPARE THE MICRONESIAN PEOPLE TO PERFORM RESPONSIBLY AND IN THEIR OWN INTEREST THE ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION WHICH THEY WILL ULTIMATELY BE ASKED TO EXERCISE. WE THEREFORE WELCOMED THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S ANNOUNCEMENT IN OCTOBER OF A MAJOR NEW "PROGRAM OF EDUCATION FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT".

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WE BELIEVE THAT THIS PROGRAM IS A MAJOR, TIMELY AND INDEED ESSENTIAL STEP IN PREPARING FURTHER THE PEOPLE OF MICRONESIA FOR THEIR ESSENTIAL FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. IT DESERVES ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT, AND IN THIS REGARD I HAVE FULLY ENDORSED THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR'S REQUEST TO THE U.S. CONGRESS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDS FOR AN AUGMENTED PROGRAM.

THE SECOND MAJOR AREA OF IMPORTANT DECISIONS TAKEN IN THE INTERIM SINCE BARBER'S POINT CONCERNED THE SUBJECT OF OUR MEETING YESTERDAY - LAND. THERE IS NO NECESSITY FOR ME TO REPLOUGH THE GROUND ALREADY COVERED. HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT OF MY BRIEF REVIEW OF RECENT ACTIONS DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE THE MICRONESIAN PEOPLE ALONG THE PATH OF SELF-GOVERNMENT, IT WILL SUFFICE MERELY TO EMPHASIZE AGAIN THE FAR REACHING AND HISTORIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION REGARDING LAND TAKEN IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS BY BOTH SIDES.

IN ESSENCE, AFTER AN INTERMINABLE PERIOD OF WAITING STRETCHING BACK OVER THE YEARS, INDEED THE CENTURIES, MICRONESIANS NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTROL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR OWN LAWS AND CUSTOMS, THE MOST PRECIOUS COMMODITY IN ALL OF MICRONESIA - LAND. IF SELF-GOVERNMENT CAN BE DEFINED AS THE INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHT TO MAKE DECISIONS ON THOSE MATTERS WHICH CONCERN HIM MOST DIRECTLY AND HAVE GREATEST SALIENCE FOR HIS SOCIETY, TRANSFERRING TO THE MICRONESIAN PEOPLE CONTROL OVER THEIR PUBLIC LAND MUST BE CONSIDERED AS NOTHING LESS THAN AN ENORMOUS STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF SELF-GOVERNMENT.

FINALLY, LET MENTION AN ACTION WHICH, THOUGH STILL LARGELY PROSPECTIVE, N
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